

# Washington taking leave of State House ... again



By Alex Jackson, Staff

The State House will be closed to the public on Monday so a famous painting of George Washington can be moved out of the building to be restored. The painting, titled "Washington Resigning His Commission," was completed by Edwin White in 1859. It will return to the State House in November 2014, according to the Department of General Services.

## Famous Maryland-owned painting of general to depart for restoration

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One of the state's most important paintings needs a face-lift — and a whole body lift.

The Maryland State House will be closed to the public Monday as the state-owned painting, "Washington Resigning His Commission," is removed. The painting, which hangs above the State House's grand staircase, is scheduled for a restoration that will leave the wall leaderless through November 2014.

Completed by Edwin White in 1859, the painting depicts George Washington standing before the Continental Congress on Dec. 23, 1783, in the State House's Old Senate Chamber, resigning his military commission.

At that point Washington had headed the Continental Army for more than eight years, since the early days of the Revolutionary War. The Treaty of Paris,

ending the war, had been negotiated, but would not be ratified by Congress until the following month.

The painting originally hung in the room it depicts, but was moved to the grand staircase in 1904.

The last major conservation work on the canvas was in 1981, according to the state Department of General Services. The last major treatment of the frame was between 1958 and 1959, when the painting was reaching the century mark.

Removing the painting will be no easy task. It measures 119 inches by 180 inches, including the frame.

The State House's grand staircase will be closed through Monday because it will take days for professional art handlers to protect the floors, remove the canvas and dismantle the frame.

On Monday, the canvas will be taken out of the State House through a window adjacent to the 1772 entrance in the

rear of the building. The state has hired a specialty contractor to remove the window and then re-install it immediately after the painting is taken out.

The project is part of the ongoing restoration of the Old Senate Chamber, overseen by the Maryland Department of General Services with assistance from the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland State Archives. The restoration is scheduled to be complete in December 2014.

The painting was last removed from the State House in 2000 to allow the grand staircase to be repainted.

The canvas and frame will be restored locally, said Michelle Parker, a spokeswoman for the Department of General Services.

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